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THE GREATNESS OF LOVE AND DEMOCRACY, AND THE GREATNESS OF RELIGION.

—*WHITMAN*

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Vol. 1 JANUARY — 1909 No. 4

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION, BOSTON

The Unitarian Calendar

Vol. 1 JANUARY, 1909 No. 4

THE PARAGRAPHER

The Task Imperative

The most imperative task of man to-day, viewed from the standpoint of religion or any other, is to contribute his share to the sum total of human good. Wherein his religion emphasizes as the chief aim of life the saving of his own soul and the accumulation of celestial treasure, it blights instead of blesses. No man has a right to live who has not learned to give. Religion counts for less than nothing if it does not impel a man to add to the gain and good of his fellowmen. By this practical outcome in altruistic action are all religions and religionists to be wisely judged.

Let Go

If your grip on the doctrines that were taught you as truth when a child is giving way, I have this simple message for you, "Let go!" Do not fancy that either truth or God will flee from you. Do not believe the assertion of any one that you are suspended over a precipice, and that only the prolongation of your grip will save you from being dashed into the abyss of falsehood. You cannot drop out of the hands of God! There is solid ground beneath you. There is no danger anywhere in God's world, if you are but honest and obedient to the best. If your faith fades and your creed crumbles and your grip gives, fear not the least. Let go!

The Religious Man

Who is the religious man, do you ask? The church-goer, the pious professor, the man of many prayers and long, the reciter of a creed, the quoter of scripture phrases, the confessor of a name, the supporter of a church? Perhaps. But there is a better than these, and a more religious. The man who lives honest life, bearing its burdens patiently, facing its problems bravely, performing its duties faithfully; who seeks to make the lives of those about him a little more happy; who puts something of his best self into every act that he performs; who lives well and loves well, — he is the religious man.

Tradition or Truth

Sooner or later you must choose between tradition and truth. Your aim in religion must be either the perpetuation of the old form or the perception of the new fact. You cannot be both the server of tradition and the seeker of truth. You must preserve the flower-pot, at the expense of the flower, or you must nourish the flower, at the possible expense of the pot. You must choose between the tradition according to others, and the truth according to yourself. The Unitarian is one who has met the issue squarely, and stands by truth and self-perception.

Trust Yourself

Trust your own thought. Put it against all the traditions of all the ages. Have faith in the self-evolved. Whatever may be your thought, however much it may contradict the opinions of your fellows and the voice of the past, believe in it and

stand by it. It may not be true, but it matters little, if it is true to you. Be true to it, and by and by the larger truth will come. Assert your supremacy, your mental mastership. Refuse to accept any alleged infallibility. Be your own judge, and abide by your own findings. There is no higher court.

The New Emphasis

Thus far the emphasis in religion has been put upon the existence and majesty of God. Men have been busy trying to prove that God is, and what God is. But to-day the new emphasis is being put upon the existence and majesty of Man. It has been shifted from the deity of God to the divinity of man. The great need of to-day is not to defend God, but rather to declare Man, — man in his larger self and diviner nature. We cannot add to the glory of God, but we can assist mankind to attain to the more glorious estate of the life divine. To this work I invite you.

The Divinest Task

This is the divinest task of men to-day, — to aid in the disclosure of the divine in the depraved; to pour sunshine of sympathy upon the slime of sinfulness, that the lily-root of purity may awaken and put forth its beauty; to hail every man as the Child of God, and then to stand by him to help him live up to the privileges of his high estate. The time has come when man must fling off the disguise of depravity that the church insisted was his native garb, and stand forth, a spiritual soul, with all the potential power and purity of the divine.

The Humanness of Jesus

Said Jesus, "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." If these words are correctly reported, and if they mean anything at all, it is that Jesus had no thought of his being other than a human child of God. There is the complete expression of his unity with his fellow men, and the practical denial of his being one in a deific trinity. He puts himself squarely in the ranks of the human, and speaks only as a representative of many. It is strange indeed that any one can read these words and not be impressed by their manifest meaning and significance. They are sufficient of themselves to refute any trinitarian theory.

To Understand Jesus

If you would understand Jesus, you must have the same freedom and faith that characterized his religious experience. To one who is bound by a creed,— pattering words whose meaning is not comprehended, — Jesus must ever seem mystical and unreal. His words are clothed with the strange and the supernatural, making him one distinctly apart from those in familiar human garb. But when one shares his liberty, casting aside trammels of the accepted and daring to set forth on the enterprises of the spirit, he becomes a comprehendable comrade. Only thus can his life really inspire; only thus can we know him as he was.

Unitarianism is more than a cult or a creed. It is a great, growing, world-wide movement of men, advancing irresistibly toward the larger truth and the freer faith in religion. We, in our special Church apart, are but a few of the many who are treading the same road toward the same splendid goal.

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

We Unitarians are associated in trying to do our part in bringing in the kingdom of God. We are engaged in the novel experiment of upbuilding a democratic religion, and embodying it in institutions which shall be fitted to the theory and practice of a democratic commonwealth and which shall be increasingly and permanently useful. These tasks require patience. I have never discovered any short cut to success in such enterprises. The kingdom of God is not abrupt or revolutionary in method. God does not seem to be in any hurry. The seed of the spiritual harvest comes very slowly to fruitage. The fever for quick returns can end only in collapse. "Easy come, easy go," is a verifiable proverb. I do not justify laziness or hesitation or timidity, but I plead for thoroughness. Not in haste but in steady application will be found the secret of success. Let us not be discouraged when a day brings very little to pass. Let us not be disheartened that we have to be all the time making new starts. When we work with God, we have got to be ready to keep step with him.

Then let us be prepared to have a good many of our plans and hopes come to nothing. We must allow for accidents. There is a lot of necessary waste and apparent failure in the operations of the kingdom of God. The sower who sows the seed of the spirit must cast his seed freely, and must not bewail if this handful falls on hard-trodden ground and that it is caught in the thorns. The habit of our business life revolts at such misadventures. It insists upon adding up satisfactory columns of figures, on beating competition, on scoring results. That desire, artificial though it is, is healthy enough when applied to our industrial affairs; but, if we try to apply it to spiritual concerns, we shall have same unhappy hours. We need to be ready to work, and keep on working, even when the immediate re-

turns are invisible. We must possess our souls in a prophetic steadfastness.

Again, if we are to achieve progress without exhaustion, we must learn to conform to the natural laws that make life orderly and fruitful. We must get into the swing of the thing. The stroke of your axe or your oars has a mechanical interval; the swing of the scythe has a regular beat; the ring of the hammers on the drill is like the ticking of a clock. Mental and spiritual effort may well follow these habits of physical labor. That rhythm of work will help us as singing out at the halyards helps the sailors to pull together. It will keep us from discord and confusion and from slovenly and unfinished tasks. It will enlarge our freedom and power and endurance.

Then let us beware how we isolate ourselves in sterile individuality. Let us make much of the joys of fellowship and coöperation. Let us work together, — together with our friends and comrades, together with God. All our labors will be lightened as we thus share them. Many of our perplexities will be solved as we seek the counsel of experience. Our vision will be enlarged and our courage sustained as we keep in contact with the sources of inspiration. In the consciousness of changelessness in the midst of haste and worry; in the sense of a firm necessity laid upon us; in coöperation with the vital forces of progress, we shall find inexhaustible strength and patience. That consciousness makes the result of intelligent and self-forgetting effort not indeed quick, but certain, and gives pledge of perpetuity. The church that thus receives the tide of vitality which flows without pause or limit from the creative source can never grow weary in well-doing. It is fed by unseen powers. It has health, sanity, fertility, and joy to possess and to communicate. — *Samuel A. Eliot.*

THE APPEAL OF "MODERNISM"

Good-by, then, to confusing and misleading echoes of the Voice which forever speaks! Good-by to the worn-out costumes of dead generations! Good-by to tiresome routine and cumbrous ceremonial! Let us tenderly lay aside the dear old copy-books wherein we have scrawled and misspelled the holy words of faith and salvation. All honor to the monuments and milestones which mark the majestic march of God in history; but our faces are to the future. We do not desert the heavenly Leader: we move at His orders toward new and grander victories.

Poor, rich human heart! say good-by also to folly and sin; to irreverent self-will and silly conceit; to worldliness, animalism, and torpid indifference; to unbrotherly greed and ill-will; to profane uses of the day and night. Learn the truth as it is in Jesus: "that ye put off the old man with his deeds, which are corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and that ye put on the new man, fashioned on the divine pattern, in righteousness and true holiness." Go forth to the life of faith, which is the life of faithfulness, and to the service of man, which is the true service of God.

O Spirit Eternal, for thy gift of life we forsake all else! — *Rev. Charles G. Ames, D.D.*

MY PART IN THE PLAN

We need, first, a faith in God, then a faith in the cause of God, and then a faith in ourselves as vital factors in the outworking of His plan.

The personal element is perhaps most needful of all. Without it there can be no successful effort. It is my privilege, and the essential condition of my work, to know that I am essential to God's cause. His plan cannot be perfected without me, and without my aid. I have that to give or to

speak or to do that no one else can give or speak or do. I am unique among men. No one else can do my work. God's eyes are not upon the multitude, but upon me, as I look toward Him.

Among all the millions of men He has singled me out to take part in the fulfillment of His plan. Without my syllable the sentence of His message will be incomplete, and perhaps unintelligible to some of those for whom it is intended. Without my shoulder to the wheel there may lack that little bit of extra energy without which it cannot move. Without me in the rank of the attacking host there may be that little opening through which the foe may enter and defeat our cause.

And this should be the consciousness of all men who strive for the victory of truth and right and God. Lives no man who is not absolutely essential to ultimate and complete success. Every man is God's comrade in God's cause. He is as essential as God Himself. And he must have faith, if this be true, not only in God, but in himself. Victory must come from his individual effort quite as much as from the decree of the Omnipotent God.

GROWTH IN RELIGION

The physical or mental power of a man assumes its natural form and does its natural work. He has outgrown the things that pleased his childhood and informed his youth. Nobody thinks it necessary or beautiful for the accomplished scholar to go back to his alphabet and repeat it over, to return to his early arithmetic and paradigms of grammar, when he knows them all; for this is not needful to keep an active mind in a normal condition, and perform the mental work of a mature man. Nobody sends a lumberer back from the woods to his nursery, or tells him he cannot keep his strength without daily or weekly sleeping in his little cradle, or exercising with the hoop or ball or top, which helped his baby-

hood. Because these trifles sufficed once, they cannot suffice now. Man, reaching forward, forgets the things that are behind.

Now the mischief is, that, in religion, men demand that he who has a mature and well-proportioned piety should always go back to the rude helps of his boyhood, to the A B C of religion and the nursery books of piety. He is not bid to take his power of piety and apply it to the common walks of life. The Newton of piety is sent back to the dame-school of religion, and told to keep counting his fingers, otherwise there is no health in him, and all piety is wiped out of his consciousness. We are told that what once helped to mold a religious character must be continually resorted to, and become the permanent form thereof.

This notion is exceedingly pernicious. It wastes the practical power of piety by directing it from its natural work; it keeps the steam engine always fanning and blowing itself, perpetually firing itself up, while it turns no wheels but its own, and does no work but feed and fire itself. — *Theodore Parker.*

JESUS, THE BLOSSOM OF THE HUMAN

What was the Christ of Nazareth but our human nature at its consummate flower? Then to every soul, this truth! What he was, I may become. What in deepest being he was, in deepest being I am. Therefore, I may stature to him in grace of spiritual attainment. He is not my miracle to adore as a sun I may never reach. He is my natural to which I may come as an acorn to its oak.

Genius is never for despair, but always for encouragement. It is not the exception, in imperial distance commanding what we cannot obey. It is the rule in which we unfold as naturally as an

egg into its oriole. When we realize that genius centers in every child born into the world, education will move in the lines of genius and result in geniuses. Then will religion achieve its holiness, not by miracle, but as naturally as the sun achieves the perfect rose. Then will the soul realize its own greatness, and become its own flaming ideal. Then will the Christ be the natural of our being, all men Christ's, and all the earth heavenly. — *John Milton Scott.*

THE SIN OF UNFAITH

The enemy of the church is sin. And what is sin? At bottom it is disbelief. In what? In the practicability of one's own human ideal. Sin is, by etymology, a split, a schism; it is the breach that is wrought in a man's own nature when he dares not venture to believe that the ideal — the imperative law of his inner constitution — can make itself at home in the real world, dares not believe that the materials of science are plastic under the hand of art. Thenceforth he is no longer a whole man, for a great flaw or fault has cut across his soul. There is begotten a fateful lesion, a breach of continuity between his instincts and his intellect. The divine and elemental passion in him, balked of its healthy issue in creative work, wears with destructive friction against the frame of his ordered knowledge. It bursts with a consuming flame to destroy his consciousness, his will, his very life. Such is the story of the spiritual experts, the doctors of conscience, the great confessors. And this is sin. It is not the doing or leaving undone of this or that that conventional morality enjoins. It is spiritual death engendered by unfaith. And man is to be "saved," not by morality, but by religion — the heartening of his own heart. — *Charles Ferguson.*

THE FREE MIND

I call that mind free which masters the senses, which protects itself against animal appetites, which contemns pleasure and pain in comparison with its own energy, which penetrates beneath the body and recognizes its own reality and greatness, which passes life not in asking what it shall eat or drink, but in hungering, thirsting, seeking after righteousness.

I call that mind free which sets no bounds to its love, which is not imprisoned in itself or in a sect, which recognizes in all human beings the image of God and the rights of his children; which delights in virtue and sympathizes with suffering wherever they are seen, which conquers pride, anger, and sloth, and offers itself up a willing victim to the cause of mankind.

I call that mind free which resists the bondage of habit, which does not mechanically repeat itself and copy the past, which does not live on its old virtues, which does not enslave itself to precise rules, but which forgets what is behind, listens for new and higher monitions of conscience, and rejoices to pour itself forth in fresh and higher exertions. — *W. E. Channing.*

TO YOUNG MEN

So live that your afterself — the man you ought to be — may in his time be possible and actual. Far away in the twenties, the thirties of the twentieth century, he is awaiting his turn. His body, his brain, his soul, are in your boyish hands. He cannot help himself. What will you leave for him? Will it be a brain unspoiled by lust or dissipation, a mind trained to think and act, a nervous system true as a dial in its response to the truth about you? Will you, boy of the twentieth century, let him come as a man among men in his time, or will you

throw away his inheritance before he has had the chance to touch it? Will you let him come, taking your place, gaining through your experiences, hallowed through your joys, building on them his own, or will you fling his hope away, decreeing, wantonlike, that the man you might have been shall never be? — *David Starr Jordan.*

THE PERMANENCE OF THE CHURCH

I believe in the permanence and blessing of the Church, because I believe in religion itself — because I believe that so long as a human mind faces the immensities and eternities of the world-order, the marvels and mysteries of the universe; so long as a human being feels the pressure of fear and hope, of love and longing, of sorrow and of joy; so long as the human soul feels dawning upon it the vision of righteousness, and acknowledges duty as the supreme control of its life; so long as the spirit of man cherishes the hope of immortality, and believes that amid all the wrecks of matter, the vicissitudes of history, and the decays of time, the spirit of man shall nevertheless endure and go on from strength to strength and from grace to grace in the eternities of God, — religion will manifest itself, will be the chief inspiration and comfort and joy of the human soul.

Therefore, also, I believe that just as in art the vision of beauty produces song and picture and poem and statue, so religion, like every other of the higher emotions of humanity, must fly to expression in symbol, in sacrament, in liturgy, in prayer, in sermon. In forms of some kind, or expression of some kind, the religious spirit will free itself. And since man is a social being he will unite with others in the expression of that worship; as he does in everything else in life. That is, he will have social worship; he will have a church. — *C. W. Wendte.*

FIELD NOTES

The "local publicity campaign" plan, inaugurated by the publicity department of the American Unitarian Association, has been wonderfully well received. The booklet, entitled "The Church of the Modern Spirit," has received much praise for the clear and concise way in which it has set forth the principles and the purpose of the Unitarian Church. Scores of churches have adopted the plan as outlined, and within three weeks after the booklet appeared twenty-five thousand copies of it were distributed. It is expected that during the winter several times that number will be sent out.

The department of public and social service, established a few months ago by the American Association, is already proving of great value and interest. It is doing much to arouse interest in the various altruistic movements of the time, and to direct it into the channels where most good can be accomplished. Mr. Forbes, the secretary, is able to lay before a church the opportunities for service in this direction, and to assist it, if need be, in making a wise choice. This new feature of our work has revealed the wide recognition among us of our social responsibility, and our desire to meet it fully and fairly.

Rev. C. W. Casson, secretary of the publicity department of the American Unitarian Association, is to make a missionary journey in January through the northwest. Starting in Ottawa, Canada, on January 3, he will speak in London, Ont., Green After a week's meetings in Winnipeg, Man., he Bay and Marienette, Wis., and Duluth, Minn. will speak at Brookings, Elkton, Pipestone, S. D., and other points under charge of Rev. Rett E. Olmstead. He will return to Boston about January 25.

The latest church to join the Unitarian calendar circle is the church in Denver, Col., being number forty on the roll. While it is a thousand miles beyond the supposed limits of calendar activity, it is none the less welcome to the circle. Others joining this month are Roxbury, Mass.; Brooklyn, N. Y., and Davenport, Iowa. The circulation for this issue will be about ten thousand.

The Missionary Committee of the Worcester Conference, Mass., has arranged to have each of the twenty or more churches within its borders send out a New Year's greeting to all of its members and adherents, together with a copy of "The Church of the Modern Spirit," the new publicity booklet. Loyalty to the Unitarian cause is urged, and the greatness of the present opportunity for the declaration of our distinctive word is emphasized.

Rev. C. W. Wendte, secretary of the International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers, is busy organizing a national union of liberal religious churches. Already there has been a good response to his appeals, and it is hoped to form a strong and wide fellowship of those who accept freedom as an essential to religious faith. It is proposed to have the first conference of the new association in Philadelphia in April.

Our greatest need to-day as Unitarian thinkers and workers is unity of purpose and endeavor. The success of the cause in which we have embarked depends largely upon our getting together and working together and winning together. The isolated Unitarian must be brought into touch with the rest of the army, and be assigned a part in the struggle. In order to do this, the attempt is being made at headquarters to bring all such Unitarians into close and coöperative relations with the nearest Unitarian church and minister.

An interesting booklet has just been issued by the American Unitarian Association. It is entitled "Ten Spokes in the Wheel of Progress." It describes ten different ways in which a Unitarian church or worker can take part in the wider work that presents itself to us at this present time. These are the Paragraph Pulpit, the Unitarian Calendar, the Post Office Mission, the Post Card Plan, Local Publicity, Tract Distribution, Subscriptions to Periodicals, Book Circulation, Press Correspondence, and the Lay Center. This book is sent free to any one on request.

An interesting case of coöperation among churches recently occurred in Milford, N. H. All the churches of the town have just held their annual fairs in the Town Hall on the same day, under the name of "The Dutch Shop." Each church had its own tables and its own financial account. A supper and a play given in the evening were coöperatively shared and the proceeds divided. This illustrates very finely the growing spirit of unity among the churches in the East and the possibility of united effort along such lines.

An interesting and somewhat novel work will be carried on in Winnipeg, Man., during this month. Rev. F. W. Pratt, the recently appointed field secretary for the Canadian Northwest, with the co-operation and assistance of Rev. C. W. Casson of Boston, will carry on meetings every night for a week in a public hall in the city, in much the same way as is common in evangelistic work. It will be of great interest and importance to know how this experiment along new lines will succeed. The power and persuasion of the liberal gospel ought to make it very effective.

Captain Thomas A. Scott

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BY-WAYS TO BOOKS

Being a few comments by the way from and concerning certain books, the identity of which does not at first appear, but which will be revealed to the diligent traveler who pursues his journey to the end of the road.

SENT WITHOUT CHARGE FOR THE ASKING

PUBLICATION DEPARTMENT, AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION, BOSTON

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The leadership of Jesus,
Salvation by character,
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